

# Psychology and the Education of Persons in British Columbia: A Critical Interpretive Investigation

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Psychological theory and research assume conceptions of the self that are highly individualistic and instrumental. When incorporated into educational theory and practice, such conceptions serve to elevate goals and strategies of self-fulfilment and individual freedom over goals and practices that emphasize citizenship and civic virtue. We present a brief, critical history of self studies in psychology as applied to education, as well as an example of the influence of psychological conceptions of the self on elementary school curricula in British Columbia. We conclude that the autonomous, self-governing individual is celebrated at the expense of the socially dependent, committed citizen.

Keywords: self conceptions, psychological theory, school curricula

Certaines théories et des courants de recherche en psychologie postulent l'existence d'images de soi très individualistes et instrumentales. Intégrées dans la théorie et la pratique en éducation, de telles images ont pour effet de placer les buts et les stratégies de l'actualisation de soi et la liberté personnelle au-dessus des buts et des pratiques qui mettent l'accent sur la citoyenneté et le civisme. Les auteurs présentent une courte histoire critique des auto-observations en psychologie dans leur application à l'éducation. En étudiant l'influence des conceptions de soi sur les programmes du primaire en Colombie-Britannique, ils ont trouvé que les programmes privilégiaient le sujet autonome aux dépens du citoyen engagé et socialement engagé.

Mots clés: images de soi, théorie psychologique, curriculums scolaires

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Whereas disciplinary psychology is committed to the study of individuals, formal education is dedicated to the preparation of persons as productive citizens. Psychology does not share directly in the societal mandate of education to produce certain kinds of citizens capable of contributing to the common good. Nonetheless, education has been of considerable interest to psychologists from the time of William James (1901). A summary of proceedings from the inaugural Education Leadership Conference

convened by the American Psychological Association in October 2001 (Belar, Nelson, & Wasik, 2003) reflects the extent of this interest: "Psychology as a discipline is important to teacher education; knowledge of learning, development, and behavior is essential for effective classroom teaching" (p. 681). At first blush, it seems reasonable that psychological investigations might guide educational policy about the development and understanding of individual competence. However, the education of persons and psychology's impact on education go well beyond a concern for individual achievement.

Recent critical scholarship has illuminated the significant role that psychology has played in the construction and social administration of persons in Western cultures, and how psychology has constructed and managed personhood in ways amenable to current liberal notions of freedom, equality, and self-governance (e.g., Danziger, 1990, 1997; Rose, 1998). For example, Popkewitz (2000) contends that since the nineteenth century, the governing of the individual in Western societies has been carried out through "the social sciences, [which] were to organize the thinking, feeling, hoping, and 'knowing' capacities of the productive citizen" (p. 19). In the early twentieth century, the shaping of the citizen was related to external morals and obligations, whereas today it is related to "a set of practices through which the self works on the self" (Popkewitz, 2001, p. 4).

These and other critical studies (e.g., Herman, 2001; Martin, *in press*; Rose, 1999) have examined the interrelationships among society, psychology, and the development and education of persons. Given these relationships, it is of considerable interest to examine and understand the manner and extent of psychology's influence on educators' understandings of learners as persons. To this end, we present evidence of changing psychological conceptions of the self in the psychological literature on children and schooling. We then describe an example in a Canadian context to show how these conceptions of self have influenced elementary school curricula and shaped understandings of educated persons. This example illuminates relationships between psychology and educational policies concerning the social, personal, and intellectual development of school-aged children in British Columbia from 1872 to 2002. More generally, we show how psychological conceptions of the self reflect the construction and management of personhood in ways amenable to current liberal notions of freedom, equality, and self-governance, but also argue that these same conceptions frequently are inappropriately devoid of historical, sociocultural consideration (Cushman, 1990, 1995; Martin, *in press*).

## A CRITICAL HERMENEUTIC FRAMEWORK

Disciplinary psychology is often characterized as a science that is largely value-free in its inquiry into human experience and action. This traditional view of psychological investigation reflects the natural science perspective that real knowledge can only be acquired through direct observation and experimentation. On this understanding of inquiry, anything outside the individual, including social context, is reduced to the status of external factor separated from the core individual. In contrast, we have taken an approach based in critical hermeneutic psychology. This approach to investigations of psychological phenomena situates psychology (i.e., organized, disciplinary, and professional psychology), including its objects and methods of inquiry, within relevant sociocultural, historical contexts. In other words, understanding a particular behaviour is not possible without understanding the context within which it takes place (Packer, 1985). In critical hermeneutic psychology, various methods of inquiry are employed, including the uncovering of what is present and what is not present, tacking between the specific and general contexts and understandings, and the inclusion of moral and political contexts as necessary contexts of the psychological object of study. Moreover, not just any interpretation of phenomena will do. Rather, interpretive findings must fit coherently with interpretations of similar contexts and the methods that define them (Martin, 2002; Packer & Addison, 1989).

The hermeneutic approach seeks to elucidate and make explicit our practical understanding of human actions by providing an interpretation of them. It is a historically situated approach, regarding explanation as first and foremost the giving of an account that is sensible in the way it addresses current interests and concerns, not a search for timeless and ahistorical laws and formal structures. (Packer, 1985, p. 1088)

Foucault (1988), Rose (1998), Popkewitz (1997), and others contend that the social sciences in general, and the “psy” disciplines (Rose, 1998) in particular, have provided ways of thinking about selves consistent with the progressive ideology of the Enlightenment, but which also serve to manage and control individuals. According to Martin (in press), psychology and other “psy” disciplines and professions (e.g., psychiatry) are technologies of the self that emphasize individuality “in ways amenable to its management, both by individuals themselves and by others” (p. 9). Psychological practices “lend a visibility, stability, and seeming simplicity to aspects of persons that otherwise might remain hidden, shifting, and mired in complexities” (Martin, in press, p. 9). For example, through the languages and practices of psychology, contemporary persons are now

aware of a person's tendency to extroversion, or another's learning disability, and so on. In general, psychological practices support and perpetuate the notion of autonomous, self-governing, and self-concerned individuals who freely choose to participate in a liberal democratic society.

Psychology has influenced practices such as child rearing, personal relations, business, and school organizations to emphasize ways of thinking, acting, and feeling that place personal fulfilment and freedoms alongside more traditional civic virtues of sacrifice and dedication to common causes. The resultant tension between individual freedom and civic virtue demands a blend of governance and self-governance. Rose (1998) contends that the key issue concerns "how free individuals can be governed such that they enact their freedom appropriately" (p. 29). This neo-Foucauldian analysis of power is not about domination and repression of subjectivity, but about the ways in which power works through subjectivity. Subjectivity, aided and abetted by disciplinary psychology, has become a source of techniques of regulation. These techniques

permit individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality. (Foucault, 1988, p. 18)

Given the foregoing, it is of considerable interest to examine the infusion of psychological conceptions of the self in educational contexts as technologies of the self that promote the self-fulfilling, autonomous individual at the expense of the socially committed citizen.

#### PSYCHOLOGY, EDUCATION, AND THE SELF

School may be understood as a social institution that educates or trains persons in particular technologies of self. School attempts to maximize certain abilities of persons and constrain others in accordance with pedagogic knowledges, and toward certain aims of discipline, responsibility, and so on. However, the technology of school does not operate on its own. Psychological products and understandings have been transported into contemporary Western schooling practices on various levels. For example, psychological procedures of authoritative observation and normalizing judgment have resulted in the adoption of these practices by persons to govern their own conduct (Rose, 1998). Thus, an individual's attributes and experiences can be compared to those deemed normal and can be adjusted accordingly. In this way, psychology has become a technique for human management (Danziger, 1997; Rose, 1998) that has expanded far beyond

psychological laboratories and investigations to the management and education of selves. To understand the influence of psychological conceptions of the self on the education of persons, we present evidence of changing conceptions of the self in psychology, and a Canadian example of the infusion of these conceptions in school curricula that have helped shape understandings of learners as persons.

## CONCEPTIONS OF SELF IN PSYCHOLOGY

We conducted a search of psychological studies on self, children, and schooling from 1850 to 2002 in the PSYCINFO database. The search requested title keywords that included *self* and *child*, *school*, *pupil*, or *elementar*. Because few titles contained both *self* and one of the other terms prior to 1930, we broadened the search for the period 1850–1930 to include all title keywords that included the term *self*.

William James' chapter on "The Consciousness of Self" in *Principles of Psychology* (1890) is widely accepted as the first influential work on the self in modern psychology. James presented a theory of self as knower (I) and known (Me). His divided conception of the self provided a framework for investigations of the self by the new science of psychology. Initial investigations of the self in the modern psychological literature centred on philosophical, theoretical, and biological questions regarding the self and the appropriateness of psychology as a method for examining it. Popular topics included self-realization, self and mental illness, self-consciousness, and self-report measures. The earliest empirical investigation of the self recorded in PSYCINFO was conducted by G. Stanley Hall (1898). He presented findings from self-report questionnaires concerning children's sense of self, and recommended the "objective" study of self according to the scientific method. Titchener (1911) also examined the nature of self-consciousness via introspective reports. On the other hand, Mary Calkins (1915) questioned the appropriateness of the investigation of self in psychology via such "scientific" methods. She also examined psychologists' understandings of self as a psychological or physiological phenomenon (1916), and compared the concepts of self and soul (Calkins, 1917).

With the new science of psychology, researchers and scholars relied heavily on scientific methods in their investigations of the self. For example, Titchener's (1911) work in the early 1900s advocated an examination of self through observable, measurable behaviour. This "objective" study of psychological phenomena allowed for the eventual domination of behaviourism, with its focus on observable stimuli and responses. Studies of self construed as inner experience were practically nonexistent from

the 1920s to the mid-twentieth century. However, a small stream of studies explored young children's identification of self, by noting such occurrences as the onset of the use of self words and pronouns (e.g., Goodenough, 1938), and employing pictorial ratings of the physical self (e.g., Clark & Clark, 1939; Horowitz, 1943). Other studies examined the behavioural management of the self, commonly labelled as "self-discipline" or "self-control," and emphasized external factors such as daily schedules that contributed to a child's developing sense of self-regulation (e.g., Brooks, 1949; Hunt, 1959). In the 1950s and 1960s, the humanistic revolt in psychology, led by Abraham Maslow (1954), took hold. This movement, a backlash against behaviourism, called for a return to internal processes and experiences. Numerous studies during the 1950s and 1960s examined self development, often in terms of the congruency between self and ideal-self (e.g., Long, Henderson, & Ziller, 1967; Soares & Soares, 1969). Much of this research concluded that as children gain an understanding of human behaviour in general, they develop a greater congruency between their actual and ideal conceptions of themselves (e.g., Griggs & Bonney, 1970).

In concert with the post-1950s resurgence of interest in the self by humanists and others, the number of self studies documented in PSYCINFO greatly increased. In the 1960s and 1970s, the use of self-concept scales to examine self, self-concept, and self-esteem flourished. Investigations primarily examined relationships between these constructs and others such as intelligence and academic achievement (e.g., Bledsoe, 1964; Engel & Raine, 1963; Phillips, 1964). Piers and Harris (1964) developed a children's self-concept measure that was subsequently revised and expanded, and is still widely used. Numerous studies examined correlates of self-concept, with results often indicating a moderate to strong relationship between self-concept and academic achievement (e.g., Ozehosky & Clark, 1970; Sears, 1970).

The interchangeability of esteem and concept scales in research studies during this period indicates a fuzzy distinction between the constructs of self-esteem and self-concept. Several studies examined self-concept using Coopersmith's Self-Esteem Inventory (e.g., Trowbridge, 1974; Zirkel & Moses, 1971), while others examined self-esteem using the Piers-Harris Children's Self Concept Scale (e.g., Harris & Braun, 1971). Several studies reported on methodological issues related to self, (e.g., Cicirelli, 1971; Richmond & White, 1971), including the reliability and validity of factor structures of self-concept scales and self-esteem scales (e.g., Battle, 1976; Michael, Smith, & Michael, 1975). The apparent need for the development of more accurate assessments of the self indicated the continuing dominance of the scientific method in psychology.

The measurement of self-esteem and self-concept continued into the 1980s through to 2002, and many studies have continued to use the Piers-Harris Self-Concept Scale and other standard, self-report measures of self-concept and self-esteem. Maslow's self-actualization theory was sometimes used as a framework for examinations of the self in children in the 1980s (e.g., Farmer, 1982; Nystul, 1984; Parish & Philip, 1982). A number of other studies focused on self-control (e.g., Humphrey, 1984; Mischel & Mischel, 1983). At the same time, the cognitive revolution in psychology gathered full force and many studies viewed self in relation to information processing, problem solving, and general skill acquisition. The number of investigations of children's academic achievement and self-efficacy (e.g. Schunk, 1982; Schunk & Hanson, 1985) and self-perceptions of ability (e.g., Altermatt, Pomerantz, Ruble, Frey, & Greulich, 2002; Pintrich & Blumenfeld, 1985) increased noticeably. Other studies examined relationships among achievement, classroom behaviour, self-regulation, self-monitoring, and self-instruction (e.g., Arnold & Clement, 1981; Fish & Pervan, 1985; Stright & Supplee, 2002; see also Harris, 1990).

This brief historical review reveals a number of trends related to investigations of self, children, and schooling since the beginning of modern psychology. Initial interest in the self was limited, and focused on philosophical and theoretical concerns. In the middle part of the twentieth century, investigations shifted to particular aspects of self, especially self-esteem and self-concept, with a focus on ways to improve the self-esteem and self-concepts of children in school settings. Current investigations continue to examine the functions and potential means of enhancing self esteem, self-efficacy, and self-regulation in academic settings. These trends are consistent with Martin's (in press) review of self studies from 1900 to 2001 in the PSYCINFO database. His search revealed that the number of articles during this entire period containing the word self in their titles totalled 45,594. The number of such articles prior to 1950 (1,434 entries) was easily eclipsed during the 1960s (2,904 entries), with a steady surge in the number of works on self in psychology since then. Martin's (in press) examination of psychological studies of self within educational contexts in the ERIC database showed a similar trend in the latter part of the twentieth century. The period from 1960 to 2000 contained over 14,000 entries with the word self in their titles. The top two areas of study were self-concept and self-esteem, followed by self-efficacy, self-regulation, and self-control respectively.

From a critical hermeneutic perspective, this overview of self, children, and schooling uncovers an empirical self that has dominated psychological inquiry for over 100 years. Scientific investigations of self have been

prominent since the beginning of modern psychology. In keeping with the scientific method of inquiry, researchers developed and applied self-report measures to gain a more accurate understanding and measurement of the self. Scientific investigations of the self greatly increased in the mid-twentieth century, when researchers expanded and applied self-report scales and developed new measures to better assess the inner experiences of individuals. The use of self-report scales also allowed for an increasing division of the self into components, such as self-esteem and self-concept. Today, psychologists investigate children's self-esteem, self-concept, self-efficacy, and self-regulation in reading, mathematics, physical education, and other specific school domains; many focus on ways to improve children's self-regulation and increase their self-esteem.

The ever-increasing refinement of the self through scientific classification and measurement has produced an empirical self that is structurally fragmented, measurable, and amenable to the interventions of psychologists and educators. Psychological investigations have produced relatively unproblematic, theoretically straightforward conceptions of a compartmentalized, accessible self that are confirmed through simplified practices of assessment, such as ratings on self-concept measures

#### SELF IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CURRICULA: A CANADIAN EXAMPLE

In North America, formal schooling has the explicit sociopolitical mandate to produce persons who are autonomous, self-governing, able to freely and equally participate in a democratic society. In addition, the goals of education aid in the development of individuals in a manner broadly consistent with the collective good to contribute to the interests of the state. Psychology has been a major contributor to the efforts to balance individual fulfillment and responsible citizenship through its investigations and theories of the self (Rose, 1999). To understand further and more concretely how psychological theory and research on the self have influenced the education of persons, we present a critical, historical examination of relationships between psychological works on the self and curricular policies and practices pertaining to elementary education in British Columbia.

In many facets of life in the early twentieth century in North America efficiency was seen as a panacea for the social ills of the day (Dunn, 1980). To this end, a mass school system modelled on the ordered, centralized manner of industry was created, and the aims and goals of school curricula reflected the new social order, valuing children as productive future members of society. Elementary school curricula for British Columbia at the turn of the century conceived of individuals as cogs fitting the wheels



of society, consistent with then extant notions of efficiency and utility (British Columbia Department of Education [B.C.D.E.], 1913). Educators "aimed to shape students to conform to society's needs, and instructing individuals to regard their primary duty as unselfish service to the community" (Dunn, 1980, p. 24).

The 1925 B.C. curricula relied on psychological theory to guide teachers' understandings of learning, development, and personhood, and promoted teachers as professionals who could and should aid children's developing sense of self. For example, the curricula provided Thorndike's Laws of Learning as an aid to teachers in their development of school lessons (B.C.D.E., 1925, p. 2). At the same time, the health curriculum embraced a progressive view of childhood that began with the immediate self in young children and expanded outward to other persons and the larger community. Throughout this developmental path, these curricula emphasized the needs, skills, and interests of individuals. It was the school's obligation to aid children's growing sense of self, one that was personally meaningful, yet dutiful and community focused. The motto of the day might have been, "I am what I can do for others." Generally, this philosophy conveyed the development of individuals through an adaptation to their environment in a manner capable of enhancing the growth of the self and contributing to the collective good. The emphasis on character education in the 1930s also reflected the view of the individual in terms of self-other relations. "Character education finds its goal in the realization of two great ideals, social welfare and individual development" (B.C.D.E., 1936, p. 95). A primary aim of education was "to develop the child as an individual through instruction, training and experience based upon his needs, interest and abilities" (B.C.D.E., 1936, p. 13).

Toward the middle of the twentieth century, B.C. school curricula began to acknowledge more explicitly the central place of psychology in the development of the child. The 1951 health education program provided teachers with a philosophical view of children that reflected the psychological emphasis of the day, and was prescriptive in its direction to teachers with respect to their students' mental health. For example, this curriculum directed teachers to "be strong in your belief that there are no truly 'bad' children," and to have "a certainty that there are causes for all behaviour" (B.C.D.E., 1951, p. 223). A "Chart of Child Needs" from the Canadian National Committee for Mental Hygiene was part of the curriculum, which listed self-esteem as a need defined as the "feeling of being worth while." Teachers were expected to fulfill this need by "Making [the] child feel a worthwhile person . . ." (B.C.D.E., 1951, p. 274).

From the 1960s onward, educational aims emphasized the

psychological development of the individual over social duty and responsibility. For example, the B.C. Ministry substantially revised the 1973 kindergarten program to emphasize the importance and value of the self. The first explicit reference to "self" in B.C. school curricula cited Dinkmeyer's work, "Child Development: The Emerging Self," which was published in 1965.

Dinkmeyer suggests that this process of learning is directed by an ever-growing, ever-changing view of Self that is an agent in the child's own development. The child's self-concept — how he feels about himself and his relationship to his world — is the most important factor in his development. By assuming responsibility for enhancing the child's view of himself, the teacher then provides a success-oriented environment in which all children are accepted and valued as persons of worth. Further, she will, through positive reinforcement, aid the children to gain self confidence without fear of failure. (B.C.D.E., 1973, p. 2)

These curricular aims promoted a developmental view that placed much emphasis on the teacher's role in nurturing a child's sense of self. The objective of deep involvement and self-direction in learning on the part of the child highlighted his or her uniqueness and individuality that resulted from a holistic compilation of various self components. This new vision of the child indicated a general turning inward to the experience of the individual, and reflected the humanistic conception of the self.

A major revision to the B.C. elementary school curricula, begun in 1979, stretched over the following decade, through to 1990. Educational psychology generally, and cognitive educational psychology, in particular, influenced curricular aims during this period. For example, the 1981 science curriculum highlighted the importance of the scientific method in all areas of life.

It would be short-sighted and foolhard [*sic*], in the latter years of this century, to deny the significance of science in our lives and hence to undervalue the teaching of science to our children. The desire to encourage a thinking citizenry, a society in which members have developed their logical abilities to face and solve science-related problems, necessitates the inclusion of science in the elementary school program. Elementary school science will open many avenues of inquiry, questions, and future choices while providing students with opportunities to collect data and make decisions related to every aspect of their daily life. Such experiences will provide students with the techniques which can be used to make decisions regarding their lifestyles, careers, and other critical issues. (B.C.M.E., 1981, p. 5)

The 1983 social studies curriculum also emphasized both these science skills and citizenship skills. This curriculum included self-worth skills under citizenship skills, delineated as to "demonstrate evidence of

concern for self; display self-confidence; seek help when required; make choices and decisions; be aware that needs for attention, acceptance, approval and affection are common to all" (B.C.M.E., 1983, p. 57).

These curricula promoted a view of the individual as a scientist, knowledge producer, and rational problem solver. Indeed, these curricula suggested that the practice of science in the classroom would enable children to some day make proper decisions about the direction of their own lives. At the same time, confidence, acceptance, affection, and concern for the self were vital. These curricula described all these developmental goals as skills, implying that such aspects of self-worth might easily be observed, trained, and learned. Moreover, the placement of self-worth skills under the general label of citizenship skills implied that gratification of one's own interests and skills would somehow move the individual closer to the goal of an active, participating, responsible citizen.

In 1988 the B.C. Ministry initiated another major revision to the B.C. curricula entitled *Year 2000* (see B.C.M.E., 1989). Numerous position statements, resource books, and research-based documents were published to guide teachers in implementing instruction consistent with the goals and aims of the program. The draft curriculum laid out a mission statement.

The purpose of the British Columbia school system is to enable learners to develop their individual potential and to acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to contribute to a healthy society and a prosperous and sustainable economy. . . . [Moreover], schools in the province assist in the development of citizens who are thoughtful, able to learn and to think critically, and who can communicate information from a broad knowledge base; creative, flexible, self-motivated and who have a positive self image; capable of making independent decisions; skilled and who can contribute to society generally, including the world of work; productive, who gain satisfaction through achievement and who strive for physical well being; cooperative, principled and respectful of others regardless of differences; aware of the rights and prepared to exercise the responsibilities of an individual within the family, the community, Canada, and the world. (B.C.M.E., 1989, p. 11)

The focus, rationale, and aims for schooling across all curricula (now referred to as *Integrated Resource Packages*) up to 2002 reflect the *Year 2000* plan. For example, the 1998 Fine Arts program was designed to "nurture the emotional, social, intellectual, physical, and spiritual self" (B.C. Ministry of Education, 1998, p. 1). The 1999 Personal Planning curriculum emphasized the need for children to develop "skills such as time-management, self-assessment, [and] goal-setting . . . that can enhance their personal well-being" (p. 1). Another aim was to develop in children the ability to "maintain an appropriate sense of personal worth, potential, and individuality" (B.C. Ministry of Education, 1999, p. 3).

The *Year 2000* plan makes a clear distinction between the individual and the citizen, yet they are inextricably entwined in the notion that working to develop one's own potential will somehow produce a responsible citizen. The self is independent, self-determining, strategic, and striving toward its own potential through the acquisition of certain quantifiable skills and abilities. Moreover, through the acquisition of such skills, the self is somehow able to move gradually toward the exercise of the rights and responsibilities of committed citizenship required in a complex, democratic society.

In summary, the changing conceptions of the self and personhood in the elementary school curricula of British Columbia illustrate the application of psychological conceptions of the self to the schooling of children. In the first half of the twentieth century, there was an evolving view of persons as fitting the wheels of society ("I am what I can do for others"), to persons as unique, but within the context of society ("I am what I can be"). In the latter part of the twentieth century, persons came to be identified in terms of more fragmented self-processes, such as self-esteem, self-concept, and self-regulation, and also in terms of individual potential ("I am what I want to be"). In recent years, the curricula have divided the self even further into a compilation of quantifiable skills that together make up a self that is strategic, self-governed, and technical, yet striving toward its own self-determined possibilities in ways somehow connected to common societal goals (which are seldom articulated clearly).

As the *Year 2000* plan illustrates, the modern educated self seems to have everything. This self is independent, self-determined, self-fulfilled, and constantly moving toward greater possible self-potential. However, this modern self remains tied to the radical, autonomous self borne of Enlightenment ideals. Martin's (in press) examination of two distinct conceptions of the self — scientific and humanistic — in educational psychology reveals an underlying masterful self, and offers a concise description of the composite self that has emerged in B.C. school curricula. Martin writes:

Both academic tasks and social experience can be mastered by the masterful self's attention to its own basic organismic tendencies and potentials on the one hand and to its metacognitive, strategic ruminations on the other. This is a self that already knows its business, one that requires only a facilitative grooming to become more fully socialized and intellectually engaged. (p. 20)

The autonomous, masterful self that has become infused in curricular aims, goals, and practices informs the individual's understanding of his or

her self as a self-governing, self-regulating, and goal-oriented agent. This self is a problem solver who is engaged in life-long learning toward self-actualization. At the same time, it is entirely possible that the technology of schooling has been made more progressive and democratic through such psychological (re)constructions of this self. According to Popkewitz (2001), the teacher administers the child who is able to "construct and reconstruct his or her own 'practice,' participation, self management of choice, and autonomous ethical conduct of life" (p. 6). However, whether or not such enhanced individual governance is truly capable of setting and achieving personal goals consistent with some defensible notion of the collective good is not clear. Indeed, questions of this kind are seldom raised.

## CONCLUSION

The parallel development of changing conceptions of the self in the general psychological literature and in the B.C. school curricula demonstrates the powerful influence that disciplinary psychology has had on the education of persons for over 100 years. The critical hermeneutic investigation presented here shows how the goals and aims of modern school curricula can be understood "as the cultural production of individuals who work on themselves through self-improvement, autonomous and 'responsible' life conduct, and 'lifelong' learning" (Popkewitz, 2001, p. 7; also see Rose, 1999).

The goals of education are to inculcate in children the social and political conventions of a liberal democratic society, and to teach them what is "real and true" in the world, at least as revealed through extant traditions of knowing. Since the inception of the formal school system in British Columbia, curricula have explicitly mandated the production of active responsible citizens as the overarching goal in the education of persons. However, changing conceptions of the self in school curricula, drawn from psychological theory and research, have increasingly merged the interests, skills, and abilities of the autonomous self with the production of the responsible citizen. The result has been the celebration of the autonomous, self-governing individual at the expense of the socially dependent, committed citizen.

Psychological discourses and practices that advance a radically autonomous self have been incorporated into school curricula and have shaped understandings of selves as educated persons. Such conceptions of the self in psychology and education are inescapably entwined with the values and interests of individualistic Western societies. According to Rose

(1999), "the consolidation of psychology into a discipline and its social destiny was tied to its capacity to produce the technical means of individualization, a new way of construing, observing and recording human subjectivity" (p. 133). Psychology has aided our individualistic conceptions of the self through technical procedures that shape selves as objects of development, schooling, and so on (Rose, 1998, 1999).

The radical autonomous self that we reveal in this article falls short of the interdependent, socially committed citizen required in a complex democratic society. The autonomous self is able, through technologies that have spread into all facets of contemporary life, to act upon itself to achieve happiness and self-fulfillment (Rose, 1998). This self is appealing because of the great value that Western liberal societies place on self-determination and self-governance. At the same time, the obligation to be autonomous, to fulfill one's self, and to strive for the "good life" also entails a loss of "dependency, mutuality, fraternity, self-sacrifice, [and] commitment to others" (Rose, 1998, p. xxiv).

In summary, it seems reasonable to suggest that psychology's service to the individual is insufficient to meet the educational mandate to shape citizens for collective participation. Yet educators increasingly rely on psychological conceptions of personhood to guide educational policy. For example, B.C. curricular packages provide a proliferation of psycho-educational kits, in the form of learning resources, to help teachers improve students' *capabilities*, such as self-esteem. These kits, often self-contained modules aimed at individual success within specific programs, include titles such as *100 Ways to Enhance Self-concept in the Classroom: A Handbook for Teachers and Parents* (Canfield & Well, 1976) and *Self-Esteem, Sport and Physical Activity* (Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women and Sport and Physical Activity, 2002). Psycho-educational products designed to build or fill up the masterful, bounded, empty self (Cushman, 1990) may work to a limited extent toward the attainment of specific skills and strategies. However, they almost always are devoid of an appropriate conception of the self as constituted within the sociocultural world through communal exchanges and practices.

Psychology, through its discourses and practices, has become infused in contemporary lives as individuals search for their selves. Changes to psychological discourses and practices can be expected to stimulate changes in our broader conceptions of ourselves as persons and citizens. Although our liberal ideals celebrate an individualistic, autonomous self, they also can celebrate dependency, mutuality, collective action, and commitment to others, and it is important that psychology and education have something to say about the latter as well as the former.

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